



A District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association

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Senator George and Members of the Senate Health Policy Committee:

The Michigan Psychiatric Society is opposed to Senate Bill 5, which would expand the scope of practice of Marriage and Family Therapists to include the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.

MPS views this bill as an attempt to solve a reimbursement problem by expanding the MFT scope of practice. Marriage and Family therapists are not adequately trained to assess, diagnose, or treat mental illness. There is no doubt that MFTs encounter individuals with mental illness in their practice. These individuals should be referred to the appropriate clinician for treatment.

The training for Marriage and Family Therapists is not equivalent to the professions trained and licensed to diagnose and treat persons with mental illness. MFT training is variable from state to state and among institutions. Generally, MFTs complete rigorous coursework in relational studies, communication and family systems, which include clinical skills, but which is clearly insufficient for the expansion which they seek.

Persons with mental illness deserve to have an equal guarantee that they will be served by professionals with appropriate training, just as is in place for persons with other illnesses.

Marriage and Family Therapists are excellent partners in addressing relational problems, which is an important field and a valuable health care service.

Kathleen Gross
Executive Director